

Reformed Church of English Neighborhood
Edgewater Avenue
Ridgefield, Bergen County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-552

HABS

N.J.

2- Ridge

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

Reformed Church of English Neighborhood
Edgewater Avenue
Ridgefield, Bergen County, New Jersey

Owner: Consistory and Congregation

Date of Erection: 1793

Architect:

Builder: Congregation

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One with balcony and tower

Materials of Construction: Foundation - brownstone
laid in clay mortar

Exterior walls - coursed
brown sandstone laid in
clay mortar, rear apse
modern siding

Interior walls - plaster
on stone walls; modern
partitions; modern floor
over older white pine plank-
ing; present ceiling wood
groined, original ceiling
vaulted

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

There is no account of any church organization in English Neighborhood earlier than 1768 when Thomas Moore donated one acre of land for a church with the proviso that it be established "agreeable to the Constitution of the Reformed Church of Holland". Nearness to the

N.J.
2. Ridge

Hackensack church was undoubtedly the reason for this rather late date. We have no information as to this first church. However, the second church, which is the present church, was erected in 1793 on a piece of property deeded to the Consistory by Cornelius Vrelante in 1794; it is described as half an acre of land where "the church is now erected". Dominie Taylor in his history of the church states that this piece of land stood next to the old church "and was an appropriate enlargement of the church premises".

The first minister was the Reverend Garret Lydecker who was licensed in 1765 but not ordained until 1770. Reverend Lydecker was a Tory and as such was forced to flee to New York in 1776; he took with him all of the records and that is the reason for the lack of any definite information concerning the first church.

The church remained without a minister until 1792 when it united with old Bergen in Jersey City in calling John Cornelison who was ordained in May 1793 as the pastor of the two congregations. He was to give one-third of his time to the English Neighborhood congregation and to only preach occasionally in Dutch; this double pastorate lasted from 1792 to 1806. It was during his pastorate that the half acre tract referred to above was purchased for ten pounds and the present church was erected. It seems from the records as if the heirs of Thomas Moore, who had given the first land, gave permission for the congregation to tear down the first church, the stone and timber being used in the erection of the second church.

After the double pastorate was ended the congregation was without the services of a regular minister until April 25, 1809 when the Reverend Henry Polhemus was installed. It was during his pastorate that the congregation was incorporated on February 3, 1810. Dominie Polhemus left after four years and the Reverend Cornelius T. Demarest became pastor in 1813. It was during Dominie Demarest's time that a struggle took place between the Consistory of the church and

the Classes of Bergen which was supported by a large number of the members of the church. It was the desire of the Dominie and the Consistory to be subordinate to the Classes and Synod of the True Reformed Dutch Church and to separate from the General Synod. This involved a long court struggle which resulted in the original Reformed group getting the property away from the succession group. Those who succeeded built a new church in 1824. In 1825 Gustavas Abeel became the pastor of the church. Three years later Reverend Philip Duryea of Saratoga, New York, was called; he remained for twenty years. The Reverend James Me Farlan succeeded him in 1849 and remained until 1885 when Andrew B. Taylor became the pastor. In 1893 the Reverend Ferrer Martin became the minister; he was succeeded by the Reverend Marcus Roop in 1896. The pastors following that date are: Reverend Harry Bacon 1910, Reverend Thomas M. Ross 1920, Reverend George W. Furbeck 1922, and the present pastor Reverend Eric T. Muller 1927 to date.

Bibliography:

Taylor, Reverend Benjamin C. Annals of the Classes of Bergen New York, Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch, n.d. 1857

Tercentenary Studies 1928 Reformed Church in America New York, Published by the Church, 1928

The manuscript of the historical
sermon preached by the Reverend Eric T.
Muller on October 20, 1935

A search of Bergen County court records
by Joseph Benenati, Bergen County Office

Walter E. Rutt
Supervising Historian

Approved:

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